

Lyre, lyre, who is the real lyre?



Just in case you thought collecting perfins was easy, think for a moment about U.S. Design #25. It's the lyre design. It's a C-rated pattern, not terribly hard to find, but not all that common either. The catalog says it was used by the Brambach Piano Company of New York. True, but not nearly the end of the story.

Albert Spencer (#1261), who probably knows more about things musical on perfins than anybody, says he has now learned that five different companies used the lyre pattern: Brambach, Francis Bacon Piano Company, Standard Pneumatic Company, The Autopiano Company, and the Bacon Piano Company, apparently related to the Francis Bacon firm. All the firms were in New York City except for Brambach which was in Dolgeville, New York.



Spencer has a cover indicating that the Francis Bacon firm was incorporated in 1904 as the successor to a firm called Raven & Bacon which was established in 1789.

Back in September, Spencer asked for help connecting these firms and all he has learned is that the perfin was used by more firms than he thought.

Is there anybody with access to New York city directories from 1897 to 1928 who could find out when these various firms were in business and if they shared common or related addresses. Any information that might explain why five firms shared one perforator over a relatively short period of time would be helpful.

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And if you wonder, as I did, what a lyre is, my dictionary says it is a "harp-like" stringed instrument that dates from ancient Greece. It was often used to accompany singers or poets.

The harp is more modern, is something of a triangular-shaped instrument with 46 strings, and it has a much wider musical range.